

[James McGuire]

1

[?], Lettie, PW., Wichita Falls Texas

Words 1300

Page 1 [125?] Wichita County DAYS WITH JESUS JAMES

With an Irish accent, an Irish chuckle, and an Irish twinkle in his eye, James McGuire, 98 year old veteran of the Civil War, is an interesting talker. He visits his son G.R. McGuire, 208 Burnett Street, Wichita Falls, Texas. Though at present (1937) a resident of the Soldier's Home in Leavenworth, Kansas, Wichita Falls claims him as he was a cowhand for Waggoner in the early days. Born in Kilkenny County, Ireland, in 1838, McGuire came to the United States in 1857, locating at St. Louis, Mo. At the out-break of the war, he volunteered his services, en-listing in Co. H. 11th Regiment, Missouri volunteers at Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis. He described vividly the battle of Chattanooga and Chickmauga. The regiments were constantly on the march and his "legs gave out". He spent five months in the hospital in Chickmauga. The hardest battle was the struggle at Vicksburg Landing, Mississippi, July 4 to July 7, 1865. Both sides lost heavily and the soldiers suffered for lack of food. Later the regiment moved on to Savannah, Georgia, to join Sherman in his march to the sea. The following reminiscences include his acquaintance with the James boys and experience with the Indians.

"[Yes?] I know Frank and Jesse James. Now don't misunderstand me. I never was with them in their meanderings or maraudings, but we were raised in the same community and as young fellows, they were pretty good boys.

"I was living in St. Joseph, Mo. when I became acquainted with them. That with in the days of course before they became the notorious bank and train robbers. I also knew the

Library of Congress

Younger brothers, Bob Ford and the Dalton boys. We all went to grammar school together in St. [?]

"We had a favorite swimming hole in the Missouri River and it became a favorite spot for us on the hot summer days. It was a favorite [?] trick of Frank's to throw mud on Jesse when he came out of the water. One day Jesse had taken enough of it and he rushed at Frank and told him he'd kill him if he didn't stop his teasings. C12. Tex. 2 "The real turning point in shaping the destiny of the James brothers came when one day their stepfather, a man named Benders, was hung by a mob in the orchard at his home. He was accused of harboring desperadoes. A negro servant was treated cruelly by a gang of men who tied him and burned off his arm with an ignited turpentine ball.

"Frank James appealed to the governor of the state for protection. The governor said that he would give him, protection. 'If I don't get [?] I'll protect myself' he said. And from that time the two boys formed a [?] that later terrorized the southwestern section of the country.

"Cole Younger told me that Jesse James knew no mercy. One time the James boys and Bob and Cole Younger pulled a big job and were in a hurry to make a get-a-way. Bob was wounded, exchanging shots with a sheriff's posse. Jesse turned to Cole and said 'Kill Bob and let's get away'. Cole said he would do no such thing. 'Well, Frank and I have to get away', Jesse said and they did. They left the rest of [???] them at the mercy of the posse. That took place in Indian Territory near site of Sulphur, Oklahoma.

"One of the most daring escapes made by Jesse and Frank James was a [\$80,000] bank robbery at Clarkville, Texas, on Red River, in the early 70s. Jesse swung into the town on a horse back one day and single handed took that amount. Officers, giving pursuit shot the horse from under him. He met his brother Frank on the other side of the river.

"Part of the way to the meeting place Jesse walked a picket fence in order to keep bloodhounds from trailing him. When he joined Frank, the two journeyed on, Frank riding behind with the money. Soon they met a doctor driving a horse and buggy. They took his

Library of Congress

horse. A little farther on they met a negro on horse back. They took his saddle and bridle. Jesse now had a horse and saddle so they made their get-a-way.

"The most exciting experience I ever had in all my life was when I was a cowhand for Dan Waggoner in 1871. I was working just then in Green Co. One day Waggoner sent me and three other cowboys to round up a bunch of cattle that had stampeded. We became separated, and when night came I lay down under a mesquite vush to sleep. It was in August 1871. Along in the night I was awakened by some [ne?] shaking me by the sholders. I looked up into the face of an Indian. He said, 'White man sabe Indian?' I shook my head. The Indian said 'Come go with me then,' in perfect English. I said, 'O, No, not me', but three more Indians put in their appearance so I changed my mind. I said, 'I was just joking. I'll go, of course'. You see I'd left my gun and ammunition in the pocket of my saddle and they had Buck, my horse, so I didn't see any use in refusing to go.

"The Indians tied my hands and feet together, and swung me beneath the horse's belly and thats the way I rode to their camp.

"Their chief was half white and half Osage. He was good to me when we got there; he told me to sit down by him and he ordered soup and meat and we feasted. We were sitting in a circle and the Indians had built a fire in the middle. I asked 'What that for?' and the chief said 'To burn you.'" I said, "I'll be durned if you'll burn me alive. You might burn me after I'm dead, but you'll have to kill me first and I've got my knife and scabbard inside my shirt.' Well you see I'm still alive. Maybe he just said that ot scare me. Indians think its funny to scare folks. I'll never forget the dancing they did that night. 4 "I was captive six months and during that time I learned to use the bow and arrow and hunt buffalo and antelope.

"One day I told the chief that I'd like to go back to my people. They'd be wondering where I was. He gave me a bow and thirty-two arrows, a compass, a horse, and \$40 in gold and told me, 'See that [?] Follow that and you'll come to Wichita Falls.'

Library of Congress

"But about fifteen Indians followed me. I reached the North & South Canadian rivers and swam my horse across, with the Indians yelling at me to come back. I got to Wichita Falls in March 1872. The city was nothing but a great trading center with several log cabins scattered about. I sold my bow and arrows for [\$32?].

"I stayed there three days and journeyed up to the Waggoner ranch. When I rode up none of them knew me. One of the cowboys walked up to me and I asked him if there was a chance of getting a job.

"He asked if I had any experience and I told him that I wasn't spoiled, and that I could soon learn. He walked [round to?] the other side of the horse and saw my initials on the saddle. 'You needn't hide your face any longer,' he said, —'its Jim McGuire. You old harp! Where have you been?' About that time Waggoner himself appeared on the scene. The first thing he said was 'Where's Buck?'—meaning the horse he'd given me before my capture. When I told him, he said, 'I'll got 50 men and go over thete in the morning and get him.' And they did.

"I drove the first stage from Nacogdoches to Mansfield, La.(1872-?) I was married Sept. 5, 1878, at Woods post office, 15 miles south of Carthage, Texas. When I married I had \$1800 in gold, four good mules, a wagon and harness, four milk cows, enough hogs to make my meat, and had my house and furniture all paid for."